

A “MUST READ” BOOK...

Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy by Lora Jo Foo

This recently published book reveals the struggles of Asian American women at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder where hunger, illness, homelessness, sweatshop labor, exposure to hazardous chemicals and even involuntary servitude are everyday realities. Asian American women of all social and economic classes suffer from domestic violence whose root causes are particular to the forms of patriarchy that exist in Asian cultures. Asian American women's health and lives are endangered due to prevalent but wrong stereotypes about Asian women. Published by the Ford Foundation, Ms. Foo's book captures their suffering and also the fighting spirit of Asian American women who have waged social and economic justice campaigns and founded organizations to right the wrongs inflicted against them.

Impact of Welfare Reform

Five years after welfare reform was passed eliminating food stamps and SSI for many immigrants:

- ✓ Hunger, illness, and homelessness are on the increase for Asian American women and their children;
- ✓ A higher percentage of Asian women (47%) than white women (28%) and African American women (33%) are being pushed into workfare (working for their welfare check) instead of being given job training and learning skills to move them from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Working Conditions/Health & Safety

Asian immigrant women work excessively long hours in garment factories and in private homes:

- ✓ In the high tech industry of Silicon Valley, white male managers use racist and sexist stereotyping to steer Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese women into low paid assembly jobs and white women into the higher paid secretarial pool.
- ✓ In the “clean rooms” of Silicon Valley where a large proportion of Filipinas work and are exposed to toxic chemicals, 38% of pregnant women have suffered from miscarriages.

Reproductive Freedom & Violence

- ✓ Asian women are pressured into bearing a male child, more children than they want, and at earlier ages than they are ready.
- ✓ Asian American women, like all women, suffer from domestic violence. But their safety needs are not being met. More Asian women die as a result of domestic violence than any other group of women.

Trafficking

- ✓ Each year, 30,000 women from the most impoverished countries of Asia are brought to the US and forced into prostitution, bonded sweatshop labor and domestic servitude.

The book was written as a call to action to support Asian American women in their struggles to move a social justice agenda to end the violations inflicted on them.

For a copy of the book, email the Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) at aapip@aapip.org. Because of the limited editions of this book, priority will be given to organizations. The book will also be available on www.aapip.org after November 1, 2002.

Mai's Story

At age 49, Mai lives with her 58-year-old husband and four children in a crowded apartment in San Jose, California. She is the sole breadwinner as her husband is disabled. Her job assembling electronics parts only brings in about \$200 a month on piece rates. Over half of her income goes to pay the rent. To make ends meet, Mai must rely on food stamps, Medicaid, cash assistance, and, as a last resort, a local church for free food. Mai wants a higher paying job, but she cannot read or write English and she has received only a few months of job training, ESL classes and job search assistance through TANF. Mai says, “The five-year TANF limit is very rough. We've only been here a bit more than two years, and our lives are not stable. The fifth year will come and I'm afraid we won't be ready.”